



Fall Summary 2010

Appalachian Coal Country Team

An OSM/VISTA Initiative

Third Quarter

July 1-September 30, 2010

The mission of The **Appalachian Coal Country Team** is to assist rural communities impoverished by environmental degradation and its consequences to make their home-place-watersheds healthier places to live and work.

The ACCT is supported by an innovative partnership among the Office of Surface Mining, AmeriCorps VISTA and local community groups serving the 3 million living within a mile of an Abandoned Mine Land.

Inside This Issue:

Message from the Team Coordinator	2
Team Resource Generation	2
Summer Program	3
Regulatory Trainee Program	3
Our Core Goals	4
ACCT Contact Information and Sponsors	6

Recovery Volunteers finish terms, leaving results

When President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Appalachian Coal Country and Western Hardrock Watershed Teams had already surveyed our communities and were ready to apply for Recovery funding. As a result, the two teams were able to add 35 OSM/VISTA Volunteers—determined college graduates willing to serve a year in a rural mining community—helping to build capacity of 30 community improvement/watershed organizations in 9 states. Those Volunteers completed their terms last quarter.

Our 35 OSM/VISTA Recovery Volunteers achieved the following:

- **\$1,967,845 Grant funds secured**
- **\$862,047 In-kind resources raised**
- **27,273 Hours worked by volunteers organized and generated by OSM/VISTA projects**
- **74 Economic development projects developed or enhanced**

The 35 Recovery OSM/VISTAs had significant impacts on their communities. Because of their commitment to serving rural communities, new jobs were created and educational programs were funded. To celebrate the work of these Recovery OSM/VISTAs and to report back to the tax-payers of America, the OSM/VISTA Teams compiled a Recovery Summary. Contact Team Coordinator, Allan Comp or the Support Office to receive a copy of this Summary.



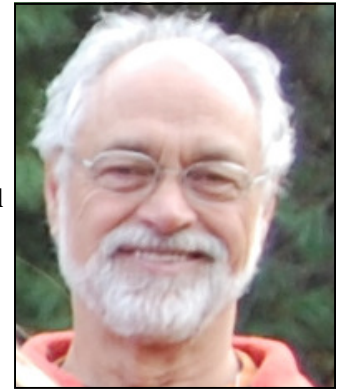
Recovery OSM/VISTA Brian Carlson trains a volunteer in water monitoring for Friends of Decker's Creek in WV.



Recovery OSM/VISTA John Krizel demonstrates an environmental education activity for the Piney Creek Watershed Association in WV.

Teams Coordinator's Message

When you coordinate – or at least try to coordinate – two OSM/VISTA teams in two remarkable regions, life can indeed be interesting. Within the last twelve months we virtually doubled the size of our team by anticipating the positions coming to VISTA in the Recovery Act and being ready to propose strong projects when the act passed. Likewise, thanks to great cooperation and support from our partners as well as a great Summer Programs Coordinator, we significantly expanded our Summer Programs to nearly twice as many states and almost twice as many positions. Cap both of those accomplishments with solid publications reporting on what those Recovery and Summer positions really accomplished – available very soon on both team web sites – and it has indeed been an interesting year.



For me, working from a base in Washington, D.C., this success is greatly bolstered by the remarkable achievements of our OSM/VISTAs in the field. The VISTA world calls theirs “Classic” positions and I would heartily agree – the 56 OSM/VISTAs we have in the field right now are indeed “Classics” in every sense of that word – models of determination, intelligence, insight, spirit, and service. In the next fiscal year we will grow to 77 -- 50 in the Appalachians and another 27 in CO and NM. Equally promising, the Secretary of the Interior’s big push to get youth involved in conservation across the nation, the President’s Council of Environmental Quality interest in Appalachian Redevelopment, the Appalachian Regional Commission as well as the USDA Rural Development interest in rural regions of poverty and even the National Council on Aging interest in working with us to better address engaging rural seniors in volunteering and civic engagement all promise another interesting year, to say the very least.

So please join us! It’s a grand adventure in national service in communities impoverished by environmental degradation, addressing the places most in need with some of America’s best and brightest. It is both a pleasure and an honor to work with these OSM/VISTAs. Keeps even this old guy a lot younger, a bit more humble, and deeply, sincerely, grateful for the opportunity.

- T Allan Comp, October 2010

Team Resource Generation: A Continuing ACCT Goal

The ACCT partners with community-led grassroots watershed groups to build capacity in their communities and develop holistic solutions to environmental and economic degradation. The OSM/VISTAs currently serving in Appalachia commit themselves to furthering sustainability in their community groups and aiding efforts to combat environmental and social problems. By focusing on the core goals of the ACCT, OSM/VISTAs and their watershed organizations greatly affect their communities and the region at large. Here are some key statistics:

	This Quarter July 1– September 30 2010	In the Last Fiscal Year October 1, 2009– September 30, 2010
Hours logged by volunteers	9,700	336,000
In-kind resources	\$250,000	\$1,450,000
Grants secured	\$205,000	\$500,800

New Program Coordinator joins the Coal Country Team



The ACCT welcomes Andrew Barnes as the new Program Coordinator. Barnes recently finished his own service year this past August. Barnes served as a VISTA in Milo, Maine. This rural town has struggled economically and was recently devastated by a city-wide fire that destroyed five buildings in its historic downtown. As a VISTA, he established 3 afterschool programs, broke ground on a community youth learning garden, coordinated an oral history project and brought college student volunteers to work with local youth. A West Virginia native, Barnes is excited to be back in Appalachia and supporting VISTAs across the region to improve access to clean water and rebuild the economic futures of these communities.

Appalachian Coal Country Team

Summer Program Members wrap up busy summer in the field

Early in the spring of 2010 the OSM/VISTA Teams had a few OSM Intern dollars left from the previous year and were waiting anxiously to hear about the possibility of VISTA Summer Associates. Three months later we had **65 summer positions in the field and a total of 75 members serving in 2010** – all thanks to VISTA Summer Associate positions awarded to the team, OSM money, AmeriCorps Education Awards that came through the Southwest Conservation Corps and a very busy Summer Programs Coordinator, Erica Calderis. As a result, the 2010 Summer Programs were able to supplement the capacity-building work of the OSM/VISTA Teams with 65 Summer Program Members and five Washington Center Interns serving in 14 States (PA, WV, OH, MD, DC, KY, VA, AL, TN, IA, IL, IN, CO and NM).

Over the summer, OSM/VISTA Summer Associates, OSM Interns and Washington Center Interns **logged a total of 23,694 service hours – more than 11 years of full-time work** -- as they worked on projects that included water monitoring, coordinating the creation of outdoor classrooms, conducting outreach, organizing festivals and countless others. Thanks to the 8-10 week dedication and determination of all the Summer Program Members and their sponsoring organizations, the 2010 Summer Program was a great success. The OSM/VISTA Teams created a Summer Programs Summary to highlight the contribution that each Summer Associate and Intern made to his/her community. Contact the OSM/VISTA Teams Coordinator or the ACCT Support Office to receive a copy of this Summary.

Let's make 2011 another successful year— Start now to think about good projects and strong candidates for 2011. For additional information, contact the Summer Programs Coordinator, Erica Calderis, at summerprograms@accwt.org.



Above: Summer Program Member Allie Raring with the Schuylkill Headwaters Association monitors water quality.

Below: Summer Program Member Kirby Steck with the Schuylkill County Conservation District works with volunteers to electroshock and inventory fish.



New OSM AmeriCorps Regulatory Trainee Program running



A group of OSM AmeriCorps Regulatory Trainees attend the ACCT Fall 2010 Training.

A new OSM AmeriCorps initiative has debuted. The Office of Surface Mining (OSM), Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) and AmeriCorps partnered to create the Regulatory Trainee Program, supporting State Regulatory Agencies in carrying out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. Through this initiative, the SCC placed 20 OSM AmeriCorps Regulatory Trainees with participating State Regulatory Agencies in 10 states including PA, WV, VA, KY, TN, AL, AK, TX, CO & NM.

The Trainees will serve for one year in the field, conducting environmental sampling, site monitoring, data analysis, program and applications development and other regulatory service. All trainees will be mentored by State Regulatory Agency Personnel and will attend bi-annual training sessions with the Appalachian Coal Country Team or the Western Hardrock Team.

ACCT Core Goals Explained: How We Bring About Success

From the start of our relationship with a community/watershed group, the ACCT works to identify specific needs and to create a clear work plan for the OSM/VISTA Volunteer. All ACCT Volunteers serve under a broad set of five core goals that allow sovereignty for the community, with support and collaboration from the ACCT. Our goals: build local capacity, engage economic redevelopment, promote environmental stewardship, enhance outreach and education and promote professional development. These goals reflect a core belief about our work with rural mining communities: water quality issues only address a fraction of a community's needs. For this reason, we support work that connects water quality issues to those of economic redevelopment, education, and community outreach. We are multidisciplinary in our approach, broadening our audience and increasing our effectiveness in service to communities. Featured below are stories highlighting some of the many successes experienced this quarter:

Goal One: Build Local Capacity

Wren Dugan sells iron oxide to raise cash resources for EPCAMR

OSM/VISTA Wren Dugan serving with the Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (PA) is researching ways to sell purified iron oxide, a major source of pollution in her area, to bring in cash resources and build the capacity of her organization. She contacted Stream Restoration Inc., a group that uses reclaimed iron oxide to create handmade ceramics and glass, and printmaking artist John Lysak about using iron oxide as a printmaking ink medium. Lysak purchased two ounces (at the price of \$5 an ounce) to use in creating lithographs. If the product works for him, he will refer Dugan to several different printmaking email listservs and local schools with printmaking programs where she can advertise the iron oxide.

Josh Larsen secures grant to hold a second Kids4Trees event

Guest River Restoration Project (VA) OSM/VISTA Josh Larsen successfully secured a \$10,000 Alpha Natural Resources grant to hold a second annual Kids4Trees event in the Guest River Watershed. The grant will be used to host a combination tree-planting and environmental education event on a 1.5-acre tippie site that is highly channelized and dumping large amounts of sediment into the Guest River. The first Kids4Trees event engaged hundreds of local school students who planted trees on reclaimed mine land.



Kids4Trees participants plant trees in VA.

Goal Two: Engage Economic Development



OSM/VISTA Patrick Smith gives a presentation on development in Grundy, VA.

Patrick Smith coordinates Low Impact Development Workshop in Grundy, VA

Patrick Smith, OSM/VISTA with the Town of Lebanon (VA) is preparing for a Low Impact Development Workshop in Grundy, VA, in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Smith said of the workshop, "It's opening up the door between the environmental agencies and the town – they haven't had a bad relationship, they just haven't had any relationship." According to Smith, local elected officials are open to low impact development and interested in these ideas, but they aren't always provided with the resources to learn about it. "[This workshop] is to turn the town of Grundy onto all of these different options that can be paid for by grants in the future. There have never been any educational seminars like this in the area, ever."

Barry Gibbs secures funding to buy solar panels for environmental ed. center

OSM/VISTA Barry Gibbs assisted the Evergreen Conservancy and Crooked Creek Watershed Association (PA) in submitting and securing a \$2,000 ARIPPA AML/AMD Reclamation Award. This funding will be used to purchase solar panels for the Tanoma Wetlands Environmental Learning Center. The energy generated will provide electricity to the on-site pavilion and run a treatment system that removes heavy metals from the nearby stream. Over time this project will inspire the community to invest in alternative energy and take better care of their water sources. When asked if this will be successful, Gibbs said, "I really think so. People here are dedicated. It's all volunteers and many are older. They are really motivated and going hard at it."

Goal Three: Promote Environmental Stewardship

Andrew Miller begins stream restoration project to ensure safe housing on creek

Andrew Miller, OSM/VISTA with Friends of the Cheat (WV), reached out to the residents of Salt Lick Creek to discuss the flooding issues they are facing and to develop a plan for natural stream restoration. Flooding along the creek is caused by excess sediment moving downstream and creating new flood plains. The floodplains are altering the land of residents, causing floods, and decreasing their property value. Miller brought an expert on stream restoration and a county commissioner to speak with those residents, commencing a \$200,000 project that will restore 1,000 feet of Salt Lick Creek. The effects of this project will benefit at least 14 landowners downstream and ensure them safe housing.

Leslie Hammond reaches community through storm drain marking

OSM/VISTA Leslie Hammond, serving with the Appalachian RC&D Council (TN), organized a storm drain marking event as a water quality improvement project. Volunteers labeled storm drains to decrease dumping and make people aware that the drains flow into streams. As a kickoff to the event, Hammond assisted the mayor of Unicoi in marking a drain. A total of 25 storm drains were marked during the event with the help of local 4H students. One participating student's family owns a rafting and kayaking company located along the Nolichucky River. Hammond noted, "The student and her mother both participated in the event and I believe the message of 'No Dumping – Drains to Stream' really hit home for them."



Volunteers mark storm drains for the Appalachian RC&D Council.

Goal Four: Enhance Outreach and Education

Jesse Daubert uses social media to attract volunteers and members to Friends of the Lower Muskingum

This quarter Jesse Daubert, OSM/VISTA for Friends of the Lower Muskingum (OH), experimented with Facebook to attract new members to his organization. American Electric Power planted trees five years ago on land owned by Daubert's organization and that area has grown into a dense young forest. Each night during the late summer at least a quarter of a million birds swoop in and roost in this forest. Using Facebook to advertise the occurrence, Daubert drew a crowd of 35 people on the first night. Daubert said, "It was the largest turnout for a small event I've ever seen!" Attendees met with Daubert and other members of his organization at the event. He hopes that this high attendance will lead to increased interest and awareness of what his organization is doing for the community.



Participants enjoy Rockbridge, which they visited during a hike coordinated by Pathfinders of Perry County.

Krystle Chipman reaches community by coordinating hikes and outings

OSM/VISTA Krystle Chipman with Pathfinders of Perry County (KY) organized monthly community outings with the Hazard Community and Technical College (HCTC) Hiking Club. Pathfinders partnered with the HCTC Hiking Club based on a common belief in the importance of physical activity. Chipman said, "It is not only important for children to be physically active (Kentucky is ranked 3rd in the nation for highest children obesity rate), but it is also important for these children to develop a sense of respect and appreciation for the beautiful area they live in."

Goal Five: Professional Development

OSM/VISTA Adam Plourde of the George's Creek Watershed Association (MD) recently built a new partnership after giving a presentation to the Western Maryland Resource Conservation & Development Council about Frostburg Grows. Frostburg Grows is a project of George's Creek aiming to turn an abandoned brownfield site into a thriving greenhouse that provides income for his group and jobs for the local community. Thanks to this project, Adam's professional skills in grant writing, public speaking, and partnership building have greatly expanded. He recently visited a greenhouse operation in Lynchburg, VA, to gather ideas. They were so impressed with what Adam and his group had pulled together that the Treasurer and Director of Stewardship at the Lynchburg Greenhouse, Scott Lowman, stated, "By the sounds of it, we're (Lynchburg Grows) going to be asking you guys (Frostburg Grows) for ideas and advice in the future!"

Goal Five: Professional Development continued on page 6

Goal Five continued

Dr. Comp moderated an OSM/VISTA panel session at the 32nd Annual National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs Conference in Scranton, PA. OSM/VISTAs Lisa Goodell (Shamokin Creek Restoration Association, PA), Josh Larsen (Guest River Restoration Project, VA), Chris Bludgus (Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority, PA), and Megan Blackmon (Schuylkill Conservation District) presented innovative reclamation and community revitalization projects based on agency partnerships with their respective watershed groups. The presentation generated interest from attendees to tap into OSM/VISTAs and local watershed groups to foster community support and involvement in abandoned mine land reclamation projects.



The ACCT OSM/VISTA Volunteers at Fall Training 2010.

Appalachian Coal Country Team

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We're on the web!
www.accwt.org

Without the generous support from our partners and funders, our work in coal country would not be possible. Thank you for believing in our work and sharing in our mission.

THANK YOU

Office of Surface Mining

Volunteers in Service to America

Citizens Conservation Corps of West Virginia

Appalachian Regional Commission

Beckley Area Foundation

EPA-Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds

Kettering Foundation

Norcross Wildlife Foundation

Park Foundation

Patagonia



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